

**THE MAN OF FAITH: OR
THE HARMONY OF
CHRISTIAN FAITH AND
CHRISTIAN CHARACTER**

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AND
CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

By JOHN ABERCROMBIE, M. D.

Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Author of "An Enquiry concerning the Intellectual Powers," and "The Philosophy of the Moral Feelings."

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TO THE READER.

THIS little work, from the pen of Dr. Abercrombie, of Edinburgh, was originally intended for gratuitous distribution among the families of a district in that city, which he often visited in the course of professional duty. As a lay-elder of the Church of Scotland, and deeply interested in the progress of religion, he was accustomed to make his visits to the sick, the occasion of exerting that religious influence, so peculiarly within the power of the Christian physician.

In his introductory address to the families for whom it was designed, he alludes to the various exciting subjects which had been agitated in that community, and which had so strong a tendency to divert attention from the *first great object* of life, and to engross it inordinately, if not supremely, in the concerns of *this world*.

He addresses a friendly voice to them, in the hope of arresting their attention and engaging their hearts in the highest and noblest of all human pursuits, manifesting at once his sincere and cordial interest in their temporal and eternal welfare.

He says, "it is related of a distinguished clergyman of a former day, that he was found fault with by his friends, for "not preaching to the times." He replied in terms which carry with them a weight of meaning worthy of the most deep and serious attention,—“When so many brethren,” said he, “are preaching to the times, will you not allow one poor brother to preach for eternity.”

“For some years past, this country,” he adds, “has resounded from end to end, with discussions and contests which relate to ‘the times.’ But amid all these commotions has it never occurred to you that life is passing rapidly on, and that it will very soon be over; that a period is approaching with fearful rapidity, when, regarding each of us, “time shall be no longer?” Has it never occurred to you to think, with deep

and personal interest, of that hour when all our best friends can do for us, will be, to convey us with suitable decency to the grave,—to cover us with green turf,—and then to return to the tumult of life, with the same activity and interest as if we had never been? To them the face of nature shall bloom fresh and fair, as it bloomed before; and the full tide of life shall flow on as it flowed before; and some pageant shall again move on, in all its mock majesty and a busy crowd shall follow it with looks of wonder and shouts of applause, till another, and another of them shall drop into the grave, and life, with all its dread responsibilities, shall close upon them forever.”

There can scarcely be a more appropriate little work for *our own times* at home, than this unpretending but precious volume. It is written in a plain, affectionate and winning style. A Christian can scarcely rise from its perusal without remarking in his own breast, a responsive monition, saying awake, awake, put on the armor of faith.

Our country presents the spectacle of a great and growing people, where the mass of *cultivated* mind is untrammelled, free to speak, to think and to act. It seems as if the human mind pent up for ages within the limits, which the civil, political and ecclesiastical institutions over a great portion of the globe, have imposed upon its action, had here found its freedom. The incumbent weight has been removed, and there are found beneath, the elements of power, intellectual and moral, that we almost tremble to see unconfined. Throughout our land these elements are beginning to awake. They feel their freedom. They attempt to rise, and finding restraint removed, they show by their incipient movements, that they *may* rise and rage with ungovernable fury.

In this crisis, whatever subject of interest arises in the community is seized upon by *the public mind* with giant strength. It would seem as if the mighty agent so long held in abeyance, delighted in any occasion, however trivial, for exhibiting his power. There is the greatest danger, that the Christian in these

scenes of excitement may forget the momentous responsibilities which his situation in such a community involves.

It is of the first importance that the *church*, in such a time as this, should maintain a high standard of holiness and activity.

This little volume will be found a most timely incentive and auxiliary to the work of Christian culture;—in promoting that *purity of heart* and *devotedness of life*, which the author so happily delineates. It is fervently to be hoped that the mild, gentle, Christlike spirit, which marks these pages may eminently characterize those among us, who are now exerting influence by the pen and the press. “The power of gentleness is irresistible,” says one author. And if at any time there was needed a soothing influence in any community to be put in requisition when excitement rages—it is now with us. And every Christian should so live and speak, that his influence may be like oil upon the waters.

The author in his introduction adds, “Life has dread responsibilities, when viewed in re-